

FAQ's
Home Delivered Nutrition Program

Question: Are we required to provide medical foods such as liquid dietary supplements?

Answer: No, the AAA or service providers are not required to provide liquid dietary supplements, such as Ensure. If provided, it is recommended that a policy include eligibility, involvement of physician or registered dietician, inclusion as an eligible meal, etc. VDA will provide additional guidance on this topic in the future.

Question: Does the physician have to provide a prescription for a liquid dietary supplement, such as Ensure?

Answer: This should be addressed in AAA policy and procedure. Most AAAs providing liquid dietary supplements are requesting a prescription or some type of approval from the physician. A request from a registered dietician is also acceptable. Even though supplements are available in stores, involvement from a health care professional helps ensure that clients that need the supplement the most receive it.

Question: What is the eligible meal equivalent for NSIP (Nutrition Services Incentive Program, previously USDA) of one can of liquid dietary supplement, such as Ensure.

Answer: VDA will provide additional guidance on this topic in the future. In the meantime, continue your present calculation method.

Question: Do we have to provide special diets?

Answer: The Older Americans Act Amended 2000 states that meals shall be adjusted, to the maximum extent practicable; to meet any special dietary needs of participants, such as health or religious requirements.

One AAA in particular is not able, at this time, to provide special diets for persons with medical conditions. A letter is sent to the physician with information about the type of diet that can be provided, and the physician determines whether or not the client can receive nutrition services.

Question: Do we have to accept Food Stamps in our nutrition programs?

Answer: No, the AAA or service provider is not required to accept food stamps or participate in the new electronic program. The AAA or service provider may wish to encourage the senior to use the food stamps to purchase food to consume at home.

Eligible clients may use paper food stamps to make meal donations in lieu of cash, until paper food stamps are phased out and replaced with the electronic version. If a client wishes to use food stamps, the AAA or provider must assure that all federal, state, and local agency provisions relating to their use and handling are met.

The AAA or service provider must assist clients in taking advantage of benefits available under the Food Stamp Program, however.

Question: How will the new Virginia Department of Health Food Regulations affect nutrition programs?

Answer: There are significant changes that will affect nutrition programs. Potentially cold foods shall now be maintained at or below 41 degrees F throughout the period of meal service. Cooked fruits and vegetables shall be maintained at 140 degrees F. The new regulations also emphasize health and hygiene of all individuals involved with meal preparation and serving.

We have tried to incorporate applicable parts of the new regulations into the Congregate and Home Delivered Nutrition Program Service Standards. AAA and service providers are encouraged to review the new food regulations under the link on this web page. Central kitchens and other food preparation sites inspected by Virginia Department of Health will be affected the most.